

8
L E T H E,

A

DRAMATIC SATIRE.

BY

DAVID GRAICK, Esq;

As it is performed at the

THEATRE-ROYAL in DRURY-LANE.

By His MAJESTY's Servants.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

GLASGOW:

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Aesop
Mercury
Charon

Mr. *Bridges.*
Mr. *Beard.*
Mr. *Winstone.*

Poet
Frenchman
Drunken Man
A fine Gentleman
Mr. Tatoo
Old Man
Taylor

Mr. *Garrick.*

Mr. *Woodward.*
Mr. *King.*
Mr. *Tafwell.*
Mr. *Yates.*

Mrs. *Riot*
Mrs. *Tatoo.*

Mrs. *Clive.*
Mrs. *Green.*

L E T H E.

S C E N E, a Grove,

With a view of the river Lethe.

CHARON and AESOP discovered.

C H A R O N.

PRITHEE, philosopher, what grand affair is transacting upon earth? there is something of importance going forward, I am sure; for Mercury flew over the Styx this morning, without paying me the usual compliments.

Aesop. I'll tell thee, Charon; this is the anniversary of the rape of Proserpine; on which day for the future, Pluto has permitted her to demand from him something for the benefit of mankind.

Char. I understand you;—his majesty's passions, by a long possession of the lady, are abated; and so, like a mere mortal, he must now flatter her vanity, and sacrifice his power, to atone for deficiencies—but what has our royal mistress proposed in behalf of her favourite mortals?

Aesop. As mankind, you know, are ever complaining of their cares, and dissatisfied with their conditions, the generous Proserpine has begg'd of Pluto, that they may have free access to the waters of Lethe, as a sovereign remedy for their complaints—notice has been already given above, and proclamation made: Mercury is to conduct them to the Styx, you are to ferry 'em over to Elysium, and I am placed here to distribute waters.

Char. A very pretty employment, I shall have of it, truly! if her majesty has often these whims, I must petition the court either to build a bridge over the river, or let me resign my employment. Do their majesties know the difference of weight between souls and bodies? however, I'll obey their commands to the best of my power; I'll row my crazy boat over and meet 'em; but many of them will be relieved from their cares before they reach Lethe.

Aesop. How so, Charon?

Char. Why, I shall leave half of 'em in the Styx: and any water is a specific against care, provided it be taken in quantity.

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Enter Mercury.

Mer. Away to your boat, Charon; there are some mortals arriv'd; and the females among 'em will be very clamorous if you make 'em wait.

Char. I'll make what haste I can, rather than give those fair creatures a topic for conversation.

[Noise within, boat, boat, boat!

Coming—coming—zounds, you are in a plaguy hurry, sure, —no wonder these mortal folks have so many complaints when there's no patience among 'em; if they were dead now, and to be settled here for ever, they'd be damn'd before they'd make such a route to come over,—but care, I suppose, is thirsty, and 'till they have drench'd themselves with Lethe, there will be no quiet among 'em; therefor I'll e'en to work; and so, friend Aesop, and brother Mercury, good bye to 'ye.

[Exit Charon.

Aesop. Now to my office of judge and examiner, in which, to the best of my knowledge, I will act with impartiality; for I will immediately relieve real objects, and only divert myself with pretenders.

Mer. Act as your wisdom directs, and conformable to your earthly character, and we shall have few murmurers.

Aesop. I still retain my former sentiments, never to refuse advice or charity to those that want either; flattery or rudeness should be equally avoided; folly and vice should never be spared; and tho' by acting thus, you may offend many, yet you will please the better few; and the approbation of one virtuous mind is more valuable than all the noisy applause, and uncertain favours, of the great and guilty.

Mer. Incomparable Aesop! both men and gods admire thee! We must now prepare to receive these mortals; and lest the solemnity of the place should strike 'em with too much dread, I'll raise music shall dispel their fears, and embolden them to approach.

S O N G.

I.

*The mortals whom fancies and troubles perplex,
Whom folly misguides, and infirmities vex;
Whose lives hardly know what it is to be blest,
Who rise without joy and ly down without rest;
Obey the glad summons, to Lethe repair,
Drink deep of the stream, and forget all your care.*

II.

*Old maids shall forget what they wish for in vain,
And young ones the rover, they cannot regain;*

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*The rake shall forget how last night he was cloy'd,
And Chloe again be with passion enjoy'd;
Obey then the summons, to Lethe repair,
And drink an oblivion to trouble and care.*

III.

*The wife at one draught may forget all her wants;
Or drench her fond fool to forget her gallants;
The troubled in minds shall go chearful away,
And yesterday's wretch be quite happy to day;
Obey then the summons, to Lethe repair,
Drink deep of the stream, and forget all your care.*

Aesop. Mercury, Charon has brought over one mortal already, conduct him hither. *[Exit Mercury.]*

Now for a large catalogue of complaints, without the acknowledgement of one single vice!—here he comes—if one may guess at his cares by his appearance, he really wants the assistance of Lethe.

Enter Poet.

Poet. Sir, your humble servant—your humble servant—your name is Aesop—I know your person intimately, tho' I never saw you before; and am well acquainted with you, tho' I never had the honour of your conversation.

Aesop. You are a dealer in paradoxes, friend.

Poet. I am a dealer in all parts of speech, and in all the figures of rhetoric—I am a poet, Sir—and to be a poet and not acquainted with the great Aesop, is a greater paradox than—I honour you extremely, Sir; you certainly, of all the writers of antiquity, had the greatest, sublimest genius, the—

Aesop. Hold, friend, I hate flattery.

Poet. My own taste exactly;—I assure you, Sir, no man loves flattery less than myself.

Aesop. So it appears, Sir, by your being so ready to give away.

Poet. You have hit it, Mr. Aesop, you have hit it—I have given it away, indeed—I did not receive one farthing for my last dedication, and yet would you believe it?—I absolutely gave all the virtues in heaven, to one of the lowest reptiles upon earth.

Aesop. 'Tis hard, indeed, to do dirty work for nothing.

Poet. Ay, Sir, to do dirty work, and still be dirty one's self, is the stone of Sisyphus, and the thirst of Tantalus—You Greek writers, indeed, carried your point by truth and simplicity,—they won't do now a-days—our patrons must be tickled into generosity—you gained the greatest favours, by shewing your own merits, we can only gain the smallest, by publishing those of other people,—You flourish'd by truth, we starve by fiction; *Tempora mutantur.*

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Aesop. Indeed, friend, if we may guess by your present plight, you have prostituted your talents to very little purpose.

Poet. To very little, upon my word—but they shall find that I can open another vein—satire is the fashion, and satire they shall have—let 'em look to it, I can be sharp as well as sweet—I can scourge as well as tickle, I can bite as——

Aesop. You can do any thing, no doubt; but to the business of this visit, for I expect a great deal of company—what are your troubles, Sir?

Poet. Why, Mr. Aesop, I am troubled with an odd kind of a disorder—I have a sort of a whistling—a singing—a whizzing as it were in my head, which I cannot get rid of——

Aesop. Our waters give no relief to bodily disorders, they only affect the memory.

Poet. From whence all my disorder proceeds—I'll tell you my case, Sir,———you must know, I wrote a play some time ago, presented a dedication of it to a certain young nobleman—he approv'd and accepted of it, but before I could taste his bounty, my piece was unfortunately damn'd:—I lost my benefit, nor could I have recourse to my patron, for I was told that his lordship play'd the best catcal the first night, and was the merriest person in the whole audience.

Aesop. Pray, what do you call damning a play;——

Poet. You cannot possibly be ignorant, what it is to be damn'd, Mr. Aesop?

Aesop. Indeed I am, Sir——We had no such thing among the Greeks.

Poet. No, Sir!—No wonder then that you Greeks were such fine writers——It is impossible to be described, or truly felt, but by the author himself—If you could but get a leave of absence from this world for a few hours, you might perhaps have an opportunity of seeing it yourself——there is a sort of a new piece comes upon our stage this very night, and I am pretty sure it will meet with its deserts; at least it shall not want my helping hand, rather than you should be disappointed of satisfying your curiosity.

Aesop. You are very obliging, Sir;—but to your own misfortunes, if you please.

Poet. Envy, malice, and party destroy'd me—you must know, Sir I was a great damner myself before I was damn'd—so the frolicks of my youth were return'd to me with double interest, from my brother authors——but, to say the truth, my performance was terribly handled, before it appear'd in public.

Aesop. How so, pray?

Poet. Why, Sir, some squeamish friends of mine prun'd it of all the bawdy and immorality, the actors did not speak a line of the sense or sentiment, and the manager (who writes himself) struck out all the wit and humour, in order to lower my performance to a level with his own.

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Aesop. Now, Sir, I am acquainted with your case, what have you to propose.

Poet. Notwithstanding the success of my first play, I am strongly persuaded that my next may defy the severity of critics, the sneer of wits, and the malice of authors.

Aesop. What! have you been hardly enough to attempt another?

Poet. I must eat, Sir—I must live—but when I sit down to write, and am glowing with the heat of my imagination, then—this damn'd whistling—or whizzing in my head, that I told you of, so disorders me, that I grow giddy—In short, Sir, I am haunted, as it were, with the ghost of my deceas'd play, and its dying groans are for ever in my ears—now, Sir, if you will give me but a draught of Lethe, to forget this unfortunate performance, it will be of more real service to me, than all the waters of Helicon.

Aesop. I doubt, friend, you cannot possibly write better, by merely forgetting that you have written before; besides, if, when you drink to the forgetfulness of your own works, you should unluckily forget those of other people too, your next piece will certainly be the worse for it.

Poet. You are certainly in the right—what then would you advise me to?

Aesop. Suppose you could prevail upon the audience to drink the water; their forgetting your former work, might be of no small advantage to your future productions.

Poet. Ah, Sir! if I could but do that—but I am afraid—Lethe will never go down with the audience.

Aesop. Well since you are bent upon it, I shall indulge you—if you please to walk in that grove, (which will afford you many subjects for your poetical contemplation) till I have examined the rest, I will dismiss you in your turn.

Poet. And I in return, Sir, will let the world know, in a preface to my next piece, that your politeness is equal to your sagacity, and that you are as much the fine gentleman as the philosopher. [Exit Poet.]

Aesop. Oh! your servant, Sir—In the name of misery and mortality what have we here!

Enter an Old man, supported by a servant.

Old Man. Oh la! oh! bless me, I shall never recover the fatigue—Ha! what are you, friend? are you the famous Aesop? and are you so kind, so very good to give people the waters of forgetfulness for nothing?

Aesop. I am that person, Sir; but you seem to have no need of my waters; for you must have already out-lived your memory.

Old man. My memory is indeed impair'd, it is not so good as it was; but still it is better than I wish it, at least in regard to one circumstance; there is one thing which sits very heavy at my heart, and which I would willingly forget.

Aesop. What is it, pray?

Old man. Oh la!—oh!— I am horribly fatigued—I am an old man, Sir, turned of ninety—we are all mortal, you know, so I would fain forget if you please—that I am to die.

Aesop. My good friend, you have mistaken the virtue of the waters: they can cause you to forget only what is past; but if this was in their power, you would surely be your own enemy, in desiring to forget what ought to be the only comfort of one, so poor and wretched as you seem. What! I suppose now, you have left some dear loving wife behind, that you can't bear to think of parting with.

Old man. No, no, no; I have buried my wife, and forgot her long ago.

Aesop. What, you have children then, whom you are unwilling to leave behind you?

Old Man. No, no; I have no children at present—hugh—I don't know what I may have.

Aesop. Is there any relation or friend, the loss of whom—

Old Man. No, no; I have out-liv'd all my relations; and as for friends—I have none to lose.

Aesop. What can be the reason then, that in all this apparent misery you are so afraid of death which would be your only cure.

Old Man.—Oh, lord!—I have one friend, and a true friend indeed, the only friend in whom a wise man places any confidence—I have—get a little farther off, John—*[Servant retires.]* I have, to say the truth, a little money—it is that indeed, which causes all uneasiness.

Aesop. Thou never spo'k a truer word in thy life, old gentleman—*[Aside.]* But I can cure you of your uneasiness immediately.

Old Man. Shall I forget then that I am to die, and leave my money behind me?

Aesop. No—but you shall forget that you have it—which will do altogether as well—one large draught of Lethe, to the forgetfulness of your money, will restore you to perfect ease of mind; and as for your bodily pains, no waters can relieve them.

Old Man. What does he say, John—eh?—I am hard of hearing.

John. He advises your worship to drink to forget your money.

Old Man. What!—what!—will his drink get me money, does he say?

Aesop. No, Sir, the waters are of a wholsomer nature—for they'll teach you to forget your money.

Old Man. Will they so—come, come, John, we are got to the wrong place—the poor old fool here does not know what he says—let us go back again, John—I'll drink none

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of your waters, not I—forget my money! come along, John.

[*Exeunt.*]

Aesop. Was there ever such a wretch! if these are the cares of mortals, the waters of oblivion cannot cure them.

Re-enter Old Man and servant.

Old Man. Lookee, Sir, I am come a great way, and I am loth to refuse favours that cost nothing—so I don't care if I drink a little of your waters—let me see—ay—I'll drink to forget how I got my money—and my servant there, he shall drink a little, to forget that I have any money at all—and, d'ye hear, John—take a hearty draught. If my money must be forgot, why e'en let him forget it.

Aesop. Well, friend, it shall be as you would have it—you'll find a seat in that grove yonder, where you may rest yourself till the waters are distributed.

Old Man. I hope it won't be long, Sir, for thieves are busy now—and I have an iron chest in the other world, that I should be sorry any one peep'd into but myself—so pray be quick, Sir.

Aesop. Patience, patience, old gentleman.—but here comes something tripping this way, that seems to be neither man nor woman, and yet an old mixture of both.

Enter a Fine Gentleman.

Fine Gent. Harkee, old friend, do you stand drawer here?

Aesop. Drawer, young sop! do you know where you are, and who you talk to?

Fine Gent. Not I, dem me! but 'tis a rule with me, wherever I am, or whoever I am with, to be always easy and familiar.

Aesop. Then let me advise you, young gentleman, to drink the waters and forget that ease and familiarity.

Fine Gent. Why so, daddy? wou'd you not have me well bred?

Aesop. Yes, but you may not always meet with people so polite as yourself, or so passive as I am; and if what you call breeding, shou'd be constru'd impertinence, you may have a return of familiarity, may make you repent your education as long as you live.

Fine Gent. Well said, old dry-beard, egad you have a smattering of an odd kind of a sort of a humour; but come, come, prithee give me a glass of your waters, and keep your advice to yourself.

Aesop. I must first be informed, Sir, for what purpose you drink 'em.

Fine Gent. You must know, philosopher, I want to forget two qualities—My *modesty*, and my *good-nature*.

Aesop. Your modesty and good-nature!

Fine Gent. Yes, Sir—I have such a consummate *modesty*, that

when a fine woman (which is often the case) yields to my addresses, egad I run away from her; and I am so very good-natured, that when a man affronts me, egad I run away too.

Aesop. As for your modesty, Sir, I am afraid you are come to the wrong waters;—and if you will take a large cup to the forgetfulness of your fears, your good-nature, I believe, will trouble you no more.

Fine Gent. And this is your advice, my dear, eh?

Aesop. My advice, Sir, would go a great deal farther—I should advise you to drink to the forgetfulness of every thing you know.

Fine Gent. The devil you would; then I shall have travell'd to a fine purpose, truly; you don't imagine, perhaps, that I have been three years abroad, and have made the tour of Europe?

Aesop. Yes, Sir, I have guess'd you had travel'd by your dress and conversation: but, pray, (with submission) what valuable improvements have you made in these travels?

Fine Gent. Sir, I learnt drinking in Germany, music and painting in Italy, dancing, gaming, and some other amusements at Paris; and in Holland—faith, nothing at all; I brought over with me the best collection of Venetian ballads, two eunuchs, a French dancer, and a monkey, with tooth-picks, pictures and burlettas—in short, I have skim'd the cream of every nation, and have the consolation to declare, I never was in any country in my life, but I had taste enough thoroughly to despise my own.

Aesop. Your country is greatly obliged to you,—but if you are settled in it now, how can your taste and delicacy endure it?

Fine Gent. Faith, my existence is merely supported by amusements; I dress, visit, study taste, and write sonnets; by birth, travel, education, and natural abilities, I am entituled to lead the fashion; I am principal connoisseur at all auctions, chief arbiter at assemblies, profess'd critic at the theatres, and a fine gentleman—every where—

Aesop. Critic, Sir, pray what's that?

Fine Gent. The delight of the ingenious, the terror of poets, the scourge of players, and the aversion of the vulgar.

Aesop. Pray, Sir, (for I fancy your life must be somewhat particular) how do you pass your time; the day, for instance?

Fine Gent. I lye in bed all day, Sir.

Aesop. How do you spend your evenings then?

Fine Gent. I dress in the evening, and go generally behind the scenes of both play-houses; not, you may imagine, to be diverted with the play, but to intrigue, and shew myself—I stand upon the stage, talk loud, and stare about—which confounds the actors, and disturbs the audience; upon which the galleries, who hate the appearance of one of us, begin to hiss, and cry off, off, while I undaunted, stamp my foot so—lol!

with my shoulder thus—take snuff with my right-hand, and smile scornfully—thus—this exasperates the savages, and they attack us with volleys of suck'd oranges, and half eaten pippins—

Aesop. And you retire.

Fine Gent. Without doubt, if I am sober—for orange will stain silk, and an apple may disfigure a feature.

Aesop. I am affraid, Sir, for all this, that you are oblig'd to your own imagination, for more than three fourths of your importance.

Fine Gent. Damn the old prig, I'll bully him—[*Aside.*] Lookee, old philosopher, I find you have pass'd your time so long in gloom and ignorance below here, that our notions above stairs are too refined for you; so as we are not likely to agree, I shall cut matters very short with you—bottle me off the waters I want, or you shall be convinc'd that I have courage, in the drawing of a cork;—dispatch me instantly, or I shall make bold to throw you into the river, and help myself—what say you to that now?

Aesop. Very civil and concise! I have no great inclination to put your manhood to the trial; so if you will be pleas'd to walk in the grove there, 'till I have examin'd some I see coming, we'll compromise the affair between us.

Fine Gent. Yours as you behave—au revoir! [*Exit Beau.*]

Enter Mr. and Mrs. Tatoo.

Mrs. Tatoo. Why don't you come along, Mr. Tatoo? what the deuce are you affraid of?

Aesop. Don't be angry, young lady; the gentleman is your husband, I suppose.

Mrs. Tatoo. How do you know that, eh? what you an't all conjurers in this world, are you?

Aesop. Your behaviour to him is a sufficient proof of his condition, without the gift of conjuration.

Mrs. Tatoo. Why, I was as free with him before marriage, as I am now; I never was coy or prudish in my life.

Aesop. I believe you, madam; pray how long have you been married? you seem to be very young, lady?

Mrs. Tatoo. I am old enough for a husband, and have been married long enough to be tired of one.

Aesop. How long, pray?

Mrs. Tatoo. Why, above three months? I married Mr. Tatoo without my guardians consent.

Aesop. If you married him with your own consent, I think you might continue your affections a little longer.

Mrs. Tatoo. What signifies what you think, if I don't think so?—we are quite tired of one another, and are come to drink some of your Le—Lethaly—Leithily, I think they call it, so forget one another, and be unmarried again.

Aesop. The waters can't divorce you, madam; and you may easily forget him, without the assistance of Lethe.

Mrs. Tatoo. Ay; how so?

Aesop. By remembering continually he is your husband, there are several ladies have no other receipt—but what does the gentleman say to this?

Mrs. Tatoo. What signifies what he says? I an't so young, and so foolish as that comes to, to be directed by my husband, or to care what either he says, or you say.

Mr. Tatoo. Sir, I was a drummer in a marching regiment, when I ran away with that young lady—I immediately bought out of the corps, and thought myself made for ever; little imagining that a poor vain fellow was purchasing fortune, at the expence of his happiness.

Aesop. 'Tis even so, friend; fortune and felicity are as often at variance as man and wife.

Mr. Tatoo. I found it so, Sir—this high life (as I thought it) did not agree with me? I have not laugh'd, and scarcely slept since my advancement, and unless your wisdom can alter her notions, I must e'en quite the blessings of a fine lady and her portion, and, for content, have recourse to eight-pence a day, and my drum again.

Aesop. Pray who has advis'd you to a separation?

Mrs. Tatoo. Several young ladies of my acquaintance, who tell me they are not angry at me for marrying him, but being fond of him now I have married him; and they say I should be as complete a fine lady as any of 'em, if I would but procure a *separate divorcement*.

Aesop. Pray, madam, will you let me know what you call a fine lady?

Mrs. Tatoo. Why, a fine lady, and a fine gentleman are two of the finest things upon earth.

Aesop. I have just now had the honour of knowing what a fine gentleman is; so pray confine yourself to the lady.

Mrs. Tatoo. A fine lady, before marriage, lives with her papa and mama; who breed her up till she learns to despise 'em, and resolves to do nothing they bid her; this makes her such a prodigious favourite, that she wants for nothing.

Aesop. So, lady.

Mrs. Tatoo. When once she is her own mistress, then comes the pleasure!—

Aesop. Pray, let us hear.

Mrs. Tatoo. She lies in bed all morning, rattles about all day, and sits up all night; she goes every where, and sees every thing; knows every body, and loves no body; ridicules her friends, coquets with her lovers; set 'em together by the ears, tells fibs, makes mischief, buys china, cheats at cards, keeps a pug-dog, and hates the parsons; she laughs much, talks aloud, never blushes; says what she will, does what she will, goes where she will, marries whom she pleases, hates

her husband in a month, breaks his heart in four, becomes a widow, slips from her gallants, and begins the world again — There's a life for you! what do you think of a fine lady now?

Aesop. As I expected—you are a very young lady! and if you are not very careful, your natural propensity to noise and affectation, will run you headlong into folly, extravagance, and repentance.

Mrs. Tatoo. What would you have me to do?

Aesop. Drink a large quantity of Lethe, to the loss of your acquaintance; and do you, Sir, drink another to forget this false step of your wife; for whilst you remember her folly, you can never thoroughly regard her; and whilst you keep good company, lady, as you call it, and follow their example, you can never have a just regard for your husband; so both drink and be happy.

Mrs. Tatoo. Well, give it me whilst I am in humour, or I shall certainly change my mind again.

Aesop. Be patient, till the rest of the company drink, and divert yourself, in the mean time, with walking in the grove.

Mrs. Tatoo. Well, come along, husband, and keep me in humour, or I shall beat you such an alarum as you never beat in all your life.

[*Exeunt Mr. and Mrs. Tatoo.*]

Enter Frenchman, singing.

French. Monsieur, votre serviteur—pourquoi ne repondez vous pas?—je dis que je suis votre serviteur——

Aesop. I don't understand you, Sir——

French. Ah le barbare! il ne parle pas Francois—vat, Sir, you no speak de French tongue!

Aesop. No really, Sir, I am not so polite.

French. En verite, monsieur Esope, you have not much politesse, if one may be judge by your figure and appearance.

Aesop. Nor you much wisdom, if one may judge of your head, by the ornaments about it.

French. Qu'est cela donc? vat you mean to front a man, Sir?

Aesop. No, Sir, 'tis to you I am speaking.

French. Vel, Sir, I not a man! vat is you take me for? vat I beast? vat I horse? parbleu!

Aesop. If you insist upon it, Sir, I would advise you to lay aside your wings and tail, for they undoubtedly eclipse your manhood.

French. Upon my vord, Sir, if you treat gentilhomme of my rank an qualite comme ca, depen upon it, I shall be a littel en cavalier vit you.

Aesop. Pray, Sir, of what rank and quality are you?

French. I am a marquis Francois, j'entens les beaux arts, Sir, I have been an avanturier all over de varld, and am a present en Angletterre, in England, vere I am more honoure

and carefs den ever I vas in my own countrie, or inteed any vere else——

Aesop. And pray Sir, what is your businefs in England?

French. I am arrive dere, Sir, pour polir la nation—de Inglis, Sir, have too much a lead in dere heel, and too much a tought in deir head; so, Sir, if I can ligten bote, I shall make dem toute a fair Francois, and quite another ting.

Aesop. And pray, Sir, in what particular accomplishments does your merit consist?

French. Sir, I speak de French, j'ai bonne adresse, I dance un minuet, I sing des littel chançons, and I have—une tolerable assurance: en fin, Sir, my merit consist in one vard—I am foreigñere—-and entre nous—vile de Inglis be so great a fool to love de foreigñere better dan demselves, de foreigñere would still be more great a fool, did dey not leave deir own counterie vere dey have noting at all, and come to Inglande, vere dey vant for noting at all, perdei—cela n'est il pas v'rai, monsieur Aesop?

Aesop. Well, Sir, what is your businefs with me?

French. Attendez un peu, you shall hear, Sir—I am in love vit de grande fortune of one Inglis lady; and de lady, she be in love vit my qualite and bagatelles. Now, Sir, me vant twenty or tirty douzaines of your vaters, for fear I be oblige to leave Inglande before I have fini dis grand affaire.

Aesop. Twenty or thirty douxen! for what?

French. For my credeteurs; to make 'em forget de vay to my logement, and no trouble me for de future.

Aesop. What! have you so many creditors?

French. So many! begar I have 'em dans tous les quartiers de la ville, in all parts of de town, fait—

Aesop. Wonderful and surprising!

French. Vonderful! vat is vonderful—that I should borrow money?

Aesop. No, Sir, that any body should lend it you—

French. En verite vous vous trompez; you do mistake it, mon ami: If fortune give me no money, nature give me des talens; j'ai des talens, monsieur Aesope; vich are de same ting—par example; de Englisman have de money, I have de flat-terie and bonne adresse; and a little of dat from a French tongue is very good credit and securite for tousand pound—eh! bien donc, sal I have dis twenty or tirty dozaines of your vater? ouy ou non?

Aesop. 'Tis impossible, Sir.

French. Impossible purpuoi donc? vy not?

Aesop. Because if every fine gentleman, who owes money should make the same demand, we should have no water left for our other customers.

French. Que voulez vous que je fasse donc; vat must I do den, Sir?

Aesop. Marry the lady as soon as you can, pay your debts

with part of her portion, drink the water to forget your extravagance, retire with her to your own country, and be a better oeconomist for the future.

French. Go to my own contre!—Je vous demande pardon, I had much rather stay were I am; I cannot go dere, upon my yard—

Æsop. Why not, my friend?

French. Entré nous, I had much rather pass for one French marquis in Inglande, keep bonne compagnie, manger des delicateffes, and do noting at all; dan keep a shop en Provence, couper and frisser les cheveux, and live upon soupe and salade de rest of my life—

Æsop. I cannot blame you for your choice, and if other people are so blind not to distinguish the barber from the fine gentleman, their folly must be their punishment—therefor, go to the rest of the company, and you shall take the benefit of the water with them.

French. Monsieur *Æsop*, sans flatterie ou compliments, I am your very humble serviteur—Jean Trisseron en Provence, ou le Marquis de Poulville en Angleterre. [*Exit Frenchman.*]

Æsop. Shield me and defend me! another fine lady!

Enter Mrs. Riot.

Mrs. Riot. A monster! a filthy brute! your watermen are as unpolite upon the Styx as upon the Thames—stow a lady of fashion with tradesmens wives and mechanics—Ah! what's this, Serbeerus or Plutus! [*seeing Æsop.*] am I to be frighted with all the monsters of this internal world.

Æsop. What is the matter, lady?

Mrs. Riot. Every thing is the matter, my spirits are uncompos'd and every circumstance about me in a perfect dilemma.

Æsop. What has disorder'd you thus?

Mrs. Riot. Your filthy boatman, Scarroon, there.

Æsop. Charon, lady, you mean.

Mrs. Riot. And who are you, you ugly creature you? if I see any more of you, I shall die with temerity.

Æsop. The wise think me handsome, madam.

Mrs. Riot. I hate the wise; but who are you?

Æsop. I am *Æsop*, madam, honour'd this day by Proserpine with the distribution of the waters of Lethe; command me.

Mrs. Riot. Shew me to the pump room then, fellow—where's the company—I die in solitude.

Æsop. What company?

Mrs. Riot. The best company, people of fashion! the *Beau Monde*! shew me to none of your gloomy souls, who wander about in your groves and streams—shew me to glittering balls, enchanting masquerades, ravishing operas, and all the polite enjoyments of Elysian.

Æsop. This is a language unknown to me, lady—no such

fine doings here, and very little good company (as you call it) in Elysium—

Mrs. Riot. What! no operas! eh! no Elysian then! [*Sings fantastically in Italian.*] 'Sfortunato Monticelli! banish'd Elysian, as well as the Hay-Market! your taste here, I suppose, rises no higher than your Shakespears and your Johnsons; oh you Goats and Vandils! in the name of barbarity take 'em to yourselves, we are tir'd of 'em upon earth—one goes indeed to a playhouse sometimes, because one does not know how else one can kill one's time—every body goes, because—because—all the world's there; but for my part—call Scarroon, and let him take me back again, I'll stay no longer here—stupid immortals.

Aesop. You are a happy woman, that have neither cares nor follies to disturb you.

Mrs. Riot. Cares! ha! ha! ha! nay, now I must laugh in your ugly face, my dear; what cares, does your wisdom think, can enter into the circle of a fine lady's enjoyments?

Aesop. By the account I have just heard of a fine lady's life, her very pleasures are both follies and cares; so drink the water, and forget 'em, madam.

Mrs. Riot. Oh gad! that was so like my husband now—forget my follies! forget the fashion, forget my being, the very quinceltace and emptily of a fine lady! the fellow would make me as great a brute as my husband.

Aesop. You have an husband then, madam?

Mrs. Riot. Yes—I think so—an husband and no husband—come, fetch me some of your water; if I must forget something, I had as good forget him, for he's grown insufferable o' late.

Aesop. I thought, madam, you had nothing to complain of.

Mrs. Riot. One's husband, you know, is always next to nothing.

Aesop. How has he offended you?

Mrs. Riot. The man talks of nothing but his money, and my extravagance—won't remove out of the filthy city, tho' he knows I die for the other end of the town; nor leave off his nasty merchandizing, tho' I've labour'd to convince him, he loses money by it. The man was once tolerable enough, and let me have money when I wanted it; but now he's never out of a tavern, and is grown so valiant, that, do you know—he has presum'd to contradict me, and refuse me money upon every occasion.

Aesop. And all this without any provocation on your side?

Mrs. Riot. Laud! how should I provoke him! I seldom see him, very seldom speak to the creature, unless I want money; besides, he's out all day—

Aesop. And you all night, madam; is it not so?

Mrs. Riot. I keep the best company, Sir, and day-light is no agreeable sight to a polite assembly; the sun is very well and comfortable, to be sure, for the lower part of the creati-

on; but to ladies who have a true taste of pleasure, wax candles, or no candles, are preferable to all the sun-beams in the universe—

Aesop. Preposterous fancy!

Mrs. Riot. And so, most delicate sweet Sir, you don't approve my scheme; ha! ha! ha! oh you ugly devil you! have you the vanity to imagine people of fashion will mind what you say; or that to learn politeness and breeding it is necessary to take a lesson of morality out of Aesop's fables—ha! ha! ha!

Aesop. It is necessary to get a little reflection some where; when these spirits leave you, and your senses are surfeited, what must be the consequence?

Mrs. Riot. Oh, I have the best receipt in the world for the vapours; and lest the poison of your precepts should taint my vivacity, I must beg leave to take it now, by way of anecdote.

Aesop. Oh, by all means—Ignorance, and vanity!

Mrs. Riot. (*drawing out a card.*) Lady Ranton's compliments to Mrs. Riot.

S O N G.

I

*The card invites, in crowds we fly
To join the jovial rout, full cry;
What joy from cares and plagues all day,
To hie to the midnight hark-away.*

II

*Nor want, nor pain, nor grief, nor care,
Nor dromist husbands enter there;
The brisk, the bold, the young and gay,
All hie to the midnight hark-away.*

III

*Uncounted strikes the morning clock,
And drowsy watchmen idly knock;
Till day-light peeps we sport and play,
And roar to the jolly hark-away.*

IV.

*When tired with sport, to bed we creep;
And kill the tedious day with sleep;
To-morrow's welcome call obey,
And again to the midnight hark-away.*

Mrs. Riot. There's a life for you, you old Fright! so trouble your head no more about your betters—I am so perfectly

satisfied with myself, that I will not alter an atom of me, for all you can say; so you may bottle up your philosophical waters for your own use, or for the fools that want 'em—Gad's my life! there's Billy Butterfly in the grove—I must go to him—we shall so rally your wisdom between us—ha, ha, ha.

*The brisk, the bold, the young, the gay,
All hie to the midnight hark-away.*

[Exit singing.]

Aesop. Unhappy woman! nothing can retrieve her; when the head has once a wrong bias, 'tis ever obstinate, in proportion to its weakness: but here comes one that seems to have no occasion for Lethe to make him more happy than he is.

Enter Drunken Man and Taylor.

D. Man. Come along neighbour Snip, come along Taylor; don't be afraid of hell before you die, you sniv'ling dog you.

Tay. For heaven's sake, Mr. Riot, don't be so boisterous with me, lest we should offend the powers below.

Aesop. What in the name of ridicule have we here!—so, Sir, what are you?

D. Man. Drunk,—very drunk, at your service.

Aesop. That's a piece of information I did not want.

D. Man. And yet it's all the information I can give you.

Aesop. Pray, Sir, what brought you hither?

D. Man. Curiosity and a hackney coach.

Aesop. I mean, Sir, have you any occasion for my waters?

D. Man. Yes, great occasion; if you'll do me the favour to qualify them with some good arrack and orange juice.

Aesop. Sir!

D. Man. Sir!—don't stare so, old gentleman—let us have a little conversation with you.

Aesop. I would know if you have any thing oppresses your mind, and makes you unhappy?

D. Man. You are certainly a very great fool, old gentleman: did you ever know a man drunk and unhappy at the same time?

Aesop. Never otherwise, for a man who has lost his senses—

D. Man. Has lost the most troublesome companions in the world, next to wives and bum-baliffs.

Aesop. But, pray, what is your business with me!

D. Man. Only to demonstrate to you that you are an ass—

Aesop. Your humble servant.

D. Man. And to shew you, that whilst I can get such liquor as I have been drinking all night, I shall never come for your water specifics against care and tribulation: however, old gentleman, if you'll do one thing for me, I shan't think my time and conversation thrown away upon you.

Aesop. Any thing in my power.

D. Man. Why, then, here's a small matter for you, and,

do you hear me? get me one of the best whores in your territories.

Æsop. What do you mean?

D. Man. To refresh myself in the shades here after my journey.--Suppose now you introduce me to Proserpine, who knows how far my figure and address may tempt her; and if her majesty is over-nice, shew me but her maids of honour, and I'll warrant they'll snap at a bit of fresh mortality.

Æsop. Monstrous!

D. Man. Well, well, if it is monstrous, I say no more--if her majesty and retinue are so very virtuous--I say no more;--but I'll tell you what, old friend, if you'll lend me your wife for half an hour; when you make a visit above, you shall have mine as long as you please; and if upon trial you should like mine better than your own, you shall carry her away to the devil with you, and ten thousand thanks into the bargain.

Æsop. This is not to be bore; either be silent, or you'll repent this drunken insolence.

D. Man. What a cross old fool it is--I presume, Sir, from the information of your hump, and your wisdom, that your name is--is--what the devil is it?

Æsop. *Æsop*, at your service--

D. Man. The same, the same--I knew you well enough, you old sensible pinip you--many a time has my flesh felt birch upon your account; prithee, what possess'd thee to write such foolish old stories of a cock and a bull, and I don't know what, to plague poor innocent lads with! It was damn'd cruel in you, let me tell you that.

Æsop. I am now convinc'd, Sir, I have written 'em to very little purpose.

D. Man. To very little, I assure you--but never mind it--damn it, you are a fine old Grecian, for all that [*claps him on the back*] come here, Snip--is not he a fine old Grecian;--and tho' he is not the handsomest, or best dress'd man in the world, he has ten times more sense than either you or I have--

Tay. Pray, neighbour, introduce me.

D. Man. I'll do it--Mr. *Æsop*, this sneaking gentleman is my taylor, and an honest man he was, while he lov'd his bottle; but since he turn'd Methodist and to preaching, he has cabbag'd one yard in six from all his customers; now you know him, hear what he has to say, while I go and pick up in the wood here--upon my soul, you are a fine old Grecian!

[*Exit D. Man.*]

Æsop. [*To Taylor.*] Come, friend, don't be dejected; what is your business?

Tay. I am troubled in mind.

Æsop. Is your case particular, friend?

Tay. No, indeed, I believe it is pretty general in our parish.

Æsop. What is it? speak out, friend--

Tay. It runs continually in my head, that I am--

Aesop. What?

Tay. A cuckold—

Aesop. Have a care, friend, jealousy is a rank weed, and chiefly takes root in a barren soil.

Tay. I am sure my head is full of nothing else—

Aesop. But how came you to a knowledge of your misfortune? has not your wife as much wit as you?

Tay. A great deal more, Sir, and that is one reason for my believing myself dishonour'd—

Aesop. Tho' your reason has some weight in it, yet it does not amount to a conviction.

Tay. I have more to say for myself, if your worship will but hear me.

Aesop. I shall attend you.

Tay. My wife has so very much high blood in her, that she is lately turn'd papist, and is always railing at me and the government—the priest and she are continually laying their heads together, and I am afraid he has persuaded her, that it will save her precious soul, if she cuckolds a heretic taylor—

Aesop. Oh, don't think so hardly of 'em.

Tay. Lord, Sir, you don't know what tricks are going forward above; religion, indeed, is the outside stuff, but wickedness is the lining.

Aesop. Why, you are in a passion, friend, if you would but exert yourself thus at a proper time, you might keep the fox from your poultry.

Tay. Lord, Sir, my wife has as much passion again as I have; and whenever she's up, I curb my temper, sit down, and say nothing.

Aesop. What remedy have you to propose for this misfortune?

Tay. I would propose to dip my head in the river, to wash away my fancies—and if you'll let me take a few bottles to my wife, if the water is of a cooling nature, I may perhaps be easy that way; but I shall do as your worship pleases.

Aesop. I am afraid this method won't answer, friend; suppose therefore you drink to forget your suspicions, for they are nothing more. And let your wife drink to forget your uneasiness—A mutual confidence will succeed, and consequently mutual happiness.

Tay. I have such a spirit, I can never bear to be dishonour'd in my bed.

Aesop. The water will cool your spirit, and if it can but lower your wife's, the business is done.—Go for a moment to your companion, and you shall drink presently; but do nothing rashly.

Tay. I can't help it, rashness is my fault, Sir; but age and more experience, I hope, will cure me—your servant, Sir—indeed he is a fine old Grecian. [Exit Taylor.]

Aesop. Poor fellow, I pity him.

Enter Mercury.

Mer. What can be the meaning, Aesop, that there are no more mortals coming over; I perceive there is a great bustle on the other side the Styx, and Charon has brought his boat over without passengers.

Aesop. Here he is to answer for himself.

Enter Charon, laughing.

Char. Oh! oh! oh!

Mer. What diverts you so, Charon?

Char. Why there's the devil to do among the mortals yonder; they are all together by the ears.

Aesop. What's the matter?

Char. There are some ladies, who have been disputing so long and loud about taking place and precedency, that they have set their relations a tilting at one another, to support their vanity: the standers-by are some of them so frightened, and some of them so diverted at the quarrel, that they have not time to think of their misfortunes; so I e'en left them to settle their prerogatives by themselves, and be friends at their leisure.

Mer. What's to be done, Aesop?

Aesop. Discharge these we have, and finish the business of the day.

Enter Drunken Man and Mrs. Riot.

D. Man. I never went to pick up a whore in my life, but the first woman I laid hold of, was my dear virtuous wife, and here she is—

Aesop. Is that lady your wife?

D. Man. Yes, Sir; and yours, if you please to accept of her—

Aesop. Tho' she has formerly given too much into fashionable follies, she now repents, and will be more prudent for the future.

D. Man. Look ye, Mr. Aesop, all your preaching and morality signifies nothing at all—but since your wisdom seems bent upon our reformation, I'll tell you the only way, old boy, to bring it about. Let me have enough of your water to settle my head, and throw madam into the river.

Aesop. 'Tis in vain to reason with such beings, therefore, Mercury, summon the mortals from the grove, and we'll dismiss 'em to earth, as happy as Lethe can make 'em—

S O N G.

By MERCURY.

I.

Come mortals, come, come follow me,
 Come follow, follow, me,
 To mirth, and joy, and jollity;
 Hark, hark, the call, come, come and drink,
 And leave your cares by Lethe's brink.

C H O R U S.

Away then come, come, come away,
 And life shall hence be holiday;
 Nor jealous fears, nor strife, nor pain,
 Shall vex the jovial heart again.

II.

To Lethe's brink then follow all.
 Then follow, follow, follow all,
 'Tis pleasure courts, obey the call;
 And mirth, and jollity, and joy,
 Shall every future hour employ.

C H O R U S.

Away then come, come, come away,
 And life shall hence be holiday;
 Nor jealous fears, nor strife, nor pain,
 Shall vex the jovial heart again.

[During the song, the characters enter from the grove.]

Asop. Now mortals attend; I have perceiv'd from your examinations, that you have mistaken the effect of your distempers for the cause—you wou'd willingly be relieved from many things which interfere with your passions, and affections, while your vices, from which all your cares and misfortunes arise, are totally forgotten and neglected—then follow me, and drink to the forgetfulness of vice—

'Tis vice alone disturbs the human breast;
 Care dies with guilt; be virtuous, and be blest.

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T H E E N D.

